



NEWS RELEASE

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New Health Benefits Package Will Aid 25,000 Utahns

Enrollment Begins July 1

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Beginning July 1, 2002, the Utah Department of Health will offer a primary care insurance program for up to 25,000 uninsured Utahns. The Primary Care Network was made possible through the first-of-its-kind federal Medicaid waiver that gives more flexibility to the state, enabling more people to have access to basic insurance.

"This is the first time the federal government has permitted a state to offer a limited benefit plan that does not include hospitalization and specialty care under Medicaid," says Rod Betit, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Health.

The Primary Care Network offers limited medical and dental coverage to adults between the ages of 19 and 64. At the request of Governor Mike Leavitt, the waiver was approved and announced last February by U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson. Approval by Secretary Thompson comes with \$15 million of new federal funding to help pay for the program, allowing the state to offer the program with no increase in state funding.

"This will bring health care to thousands of Utahns who need it," said Leavitt. "Providing basic health care to many, rather than unlimited care to a few is sensible healthcare policy."

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By targeting adults who are working but do not qualify for coverage based on their employer or employment situation, health officials hope to cut in half the number of uninsured adults below 150 percent of poverty.

Primary Care Network eligibility requirements, enrollment details and coverage information can be found at www.health.utah.gov and by calling the Health Resource Line 1-888-222-2542.

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